

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A system for targeted messaging comprising:
  - 5 a plurality of electronic labels associated with a plurality of items; and
  - a portable unit associated with a visitor adapted to display advertising information related to at least a selected item of said plurality of items, wherein a selected one of said plurality of electronic labels associated with said selected item is adapted to produce attention-catching indicia
  - 10 when said visitor is in proximity to said selected item.
2. The system according to claim 1 further comprising at least one tracking transponder to communicate with said portable unit when said portable unit is in a vicinity of said transponder.
3. The system of claim 2 further comprising a central controller to control  
15 transmission of said advertising information to said portable unit, and control activation of said selected electronic label to produce said attention-catching indicia.
4. The system of claim 2 wherein said central controller is adapted to evaluate a location of said portable unit and control operation of said  
20 transponder.
5. The system according to claim 4, wherein said controller comprises a tracking control to evaluate the location of said portable unit based on a unit ID transmitted by said portable unit and a transponder ID transmitted by said transponder.
- 25 6. The system according to claim 5, wherein said controller further comprises:
  - an advertising module to store said advertising information;
  - a portable unit control to control transmission of said advertising information to said portable unit; and
  - 30 a label control to control activation of said electronic labels.
7. The system of claim 2 further comprising a central controller adapted to transmit said advertising information to said transponder.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein said transponder is adapted to transmit to said portable unit said advertising information and a selected item ID associated with said selected electronic label, and wherein said portable unit is adapted to activate said selected electronic label according to said selected item ID to produce said attention-catching indicia.
9. The system according to claim 8, wherein said controller comprises an advertising module to store said advertising information and said item-specific information.
10. The system according to claim 1, wherein said portable unit comprises a data interface to store visitor preferences related to a visitor associated with said portable unit.
11. The system of claim 10 wherein said selected electronic label is adapted to display a targeted offer related to said visitor preferences.
12. A method of transmitting targeted information to a visitor comprising:  
activating an electronic label associated with an item to produce attention-catching indicia when said visitor is in proximity to said item;  
and  
displaying advertising information related to said item on a display of a portable unit associated with said visitor.
13. The method of claim 12 comprising:  
evaluating a current location of said portable unit; and  
selecting an item in the vicinity of said location of said portable unit, wherein the activated electronic label is associated with said selected item.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein said evaluating comprises seeking a transponder in a vicinity of said portable unit.
15. The method of claim 14 wherein said evaluating further comprises comparing an ID of said transponder with an ID of said portable unit.
16. The method of claim 13 wherein said activating comprises transmitting an activation signal from a central controller to said electronic label.
17. The method of claim 13 wherein displaying advertising information comprises transmitting said advertising information from a central controller to said portable unit.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein displaying advertising information comprises transmitting said advertising information from a tracking transponder in a vicinity of said portable unit to said portable unit.

19. The method of claim 12 wherein said activating comprises:

5           transmitting a selected ID associated with said electronic label from a tracking transponder in a vicinity of said portable unit to said portable unit.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said activating further comprises transmitting said selected ID from said portable unit to said electronic label.

10   21. The method of claim 12 further comprising halting for a period of time after said displaying advertising information.